

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8049

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 1601/1

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, SF, ECON, OPIC, RH

SUBJECT: FAREWELL CALL ON HEAD OF STATE

SUMMARY: GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON DURING MY FAREWELL CALL REVIEWED STATE NIGERIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND, DESPITE CERTAIN MEMORIES AND OCCASIONAL DISAGREEMENTS, CONCLUDED BILATERAL PROBLEMS MINIMAL, RAPPORT EXCELLENT, AND COMMUNICATIONS RESTORED.

1. DURING MY NINETY-MINUTE FAREWELL CALL AT DODAN BARRACKS ON FEBRUARY 17, GENERAL GOWON RANGED WIDELY OVER A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS WHICH HE HOPED I WOULD CONVEY TO MY GOVERNMENT. CHARACTERISTICALLY HIS WAS A NON-STOP PERFORMANCE, REVEALING VERY LITTLE THAT WAS NEW BUT SHOWING A DEDICATION, SINCERITY, AND HUMANE SIMPLICITY THAT HAVE COME TO MARK HIS LEADERSHIP FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS.

2. AFTER FELICITOUS PRELIMINARIES, EXCHANGES OF GOODWILL, AND CONFIDENT EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE FOR OUR INDIVIDUAL FUTURES AND THOSE OF OUR NATIONS AND BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE GENERAL PROCEEDED TO SET THE PACE:

3. BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE KNEW OF NO PROBLEMS. HE IS AWARE THAT FROM TIME TO TIME THERE ARE DISAGREEMENTS, BUT SUCH IS THE

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NATURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS. WE SHOULD KNOW THAT

POST-WAR RECONCILIATION IN NIGERIA HAS AN INTERNATIONAL AS WELL AS A DOMESTIC CONTENT. FMG-USG RELATIONS WERE BADLY STRAINED BY THE WAR, AND HE THOUGHT THAT I SHOULD KNOW THAT HE ATTRIBUTED A PART OF THE STRAIN TO THE USG ITSELF, AS SHARPLY DISTINGUISHED FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. INDEED, HE EXPECTED THEN AND NOW DISAGREEABLE EXPRESSIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS; WE WILL ALWAYS FUME OVER THEM BUT PROMPTLY FORGET THEM AS HUMAN ABERRATIONS. FMG-USG RELATIONS, HOWEVER, WERE SORELY TESTED BECAUSE OF OUR EXTREME NEUTRALITY, WHICH WAS PERHAPS IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST, BUT WHICH WE COULD HARDLY EXPECT NIGERIA, IN HER TIME OF GREATEST NEED, TO WELCOME FROM A NATION WHICH HAD BEEN KNOWN AS A FRIEND. HE IS THANKFUL THAT ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE IN THE PAST, COMPLETELY FORGIVEN IF NOT FORGOTTEN, AND NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN RESTORED. HE THOUGHT THAT I WOULD AGREE WITH HIM THAT THE LAST THREE YEARS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY A "RESTORATION OF COMMUNICATION," ERUPTING IN MISUNDERSTANDING OCCASIONALLY BUT NEVER THREATENING FRIENDSHIP.

4. SOUTHERN AFRICA. AS ALWAYS, THE GENERAL WARMED UP TO THIS SUBJECT, SPENDING MORE THAN A THIRD OF OUR TIME DWELLING ON IT. HE IS NOW CONFIDENT THAT WITHIN A SHORT TIME, PERHAPS NO MORE THAN EIGHTEEN MONTHS, ALL OF SOUTHERN AFRICA EXCEPT SOUTH AFRICA WILL HAVE MAJORITY RULE. EVEN IAN SMITH WILL BE SEEKING PERSONAL REFUGE EITHER, GOWON APPARENTLY SINCERELY BELIEVES, IN THE UNITED STATES OR SOUTH AFRICA. HOPEFULLY "IN THIS CASE" THE USG WILL FORGET ASYLUM, AND THIS "EVIL MAN" WILL BE FORCED TO "LIVE WITH VORSTER UNTIL HE TOO FALLS."

5. HE HAS CLOSELY FOLLOWED OUR ATTEMPTS TO REPEAL LEGISLATION PERMITTING IMPORTATION OF RHODESIAN CHROME (I BRIEFLY REVIEWED THESE ATTEMPTS FOR HIM, ESPECIALLY TO CLARIFY THE ROLE OF OUR EXECUTIVE BRANCH, WHICH HE PROFESSED TO BELIEVE WAS PASSIVE AT BEST). AS HE HAD TOLD ME BEFORE, HE STILL REGARDS THIS IMPORTATION AS AN "EXAMPLE" WHICH ALL ENEMIES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA HAVE PROUDLY CLUNG TO AND USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR THEIR OWN MISDEEDS. SOON IT WILL NOT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE WHAT OUR CONGRESS DOES ABOUT THIS BLOT ON THE AMERICAN RECORD, BUT IT WILL BE SAD IF THE MARCH TO FREEDOM IN RHODESIA IS "CONSUMMATED WHILE AMERICA FIDDLES."

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6. AS FOR SOUTH AFRICA, "THIS IS HARDER BUT FAR FROM IMPOSSIBLE." HE SEES SIGNS OF AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS THERE, EVEN IN VORSTER HIMSELF, AND HE IS CONFIDENT THAT YOUNG WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS

WILL EVENTUALLY FORCE CHANGES THAT WILL LEAD TO A RECOGNITION OF HUMAN DIGNITY. IN HIS OPINION THE UNITED STATES, WHICH AT THE MAXIMUM HAS BEEN NEUTRAL AS MAJORITY RULE EVOLVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN SOUTH AFRICA. LG NATION

AS ECONOMICALLY AND TECHNOLOGICALLY POWERFUL AS THE US IS WITHOUT
"TRUMP CARDS" IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE DOES NOT EXPECT THE US OR
ANY OTHER WESTERN NATION TO USE MILITARY FORCE IN SOUTH AFRICA,
BUT HE IS CONVINCED THAT USG "SUBTLE ECONOMIC PRESSURES" AGAINST
SA COULD HASTEN A CHANGE. I COULD NEVER COAX MORE SPECIFIC
DESCRIPTIONS, ASKING IN THE PROCESS WHETHER HE THOUGHT ESSENTIAL
CHANGE WOULD COME IN SA EVEN IF ALL US INVESTMENT WERE MAGICALLY
REMOVED OVERNIGHT, OR WHETHER BLACKS MAY NOT BE HURT MORE THAN
WHITE IN SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. PERHAPS BLACKS WOULD BE HURT
MORE, BUT IT'S A PRICE TO PAY. ESSENTIAL CHANGE MAY NOT RESULT
OVERNIGHT, BUT THE SA REGIME WOULD SIMPLY BE UNABLE TO WITHSTAND
CONTINUING US ECONOMIC PRESSURE. WAS HE REFERRING TO AN EMBARGO,
WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TOO SUCCESSFUL IN RHODESIA? HE DID NOT RULE
OUT AN EMBARGO AS AN ECONOMIC INSTRUMENT, BUT WHAT HE REALLY
SOLICITED WAS USG LEADERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTING ITSELF AND IN
ORGANIZING OTHER NATIONS TO EXERT "SUBTLE ECONOMIC PRESSURES."
HE REALIZES THAT IT HAS BECOME OLD-FASHIONED TO SPEAK
OF MORALITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (THE US HAS DONE ITS SHARE
TO MAKE IT OLD-FASHIONED), BUT IN THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA,
NATIONS WITH THE MEANS, THE POWER, THE INFLUENCE HAVE A MORAL
OBLIGATION TO "FORCE WINDS OF CHANGE." I SHOULD KNOW THAT HE
IS NOT ADVOCATING DRIVING FOUR MILLION SA WHITE INTO THE SEA,
HE KNOWS THEY HAVE NO PLACE TO GO, THAT THEY ARE AT HOME, BUT
IF THE IDEAL IS A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY IN SA, IT CAN NOT BE
REACHED BY THE CURRENT AND SEEMINGLY PLANNED CONTINUED
SUBJUGATION OF SIXTEEN MILLION BLACKS.

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7. CURRENT "INDUSTRIAL UNREST" IN NIGERIA. PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THE UDOJI REPORT WILL BE SOLVED, AND THE AGITATION WILL SOON DIE DOWN. THE FMG IS AWARE THAT POLITICAL AGITATORS HAVE PROLONGED THE CONTROVERSY, BUT HIS IS NOT A REPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, IF "HOSTILE ELEMENTS" CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT LEGITIMATE ECONOMIC CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE, THE FMG WILL DO ITS DUTY. THE "UDJI" PROBLEMS REVEAL A NIGERIA SOMEWHAT AKIN TO THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH: AS SOON AS CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THAT OIL MONEY WILL NOT BRING EACH ONE A MILLION NAIRA, ANY MORE THAN EACH AMERICAN GOING WESTWARD FOUND A POT OF GOLD, THE "INDUSTRIAL UNREST" WILL FADE AWAY.

8. OPIC. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHY HE CHOSE TO DEAL SEPARATELY WITH THE OPIC QUESTION. BEGAN BY SAYING HE HOPED I WAS PLEASED THAT AN AGREEMENT HAD FINALLY BEEN REACHED. HE PERSONALLY HAD FOLLOWED OPIC NEGOTIATIONS AND HAD FINALLY RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO SIGNING THE AGREEMENT. AN INSURANCE PROGRAM OF THIS TYPE HAD ALWAYS SEEMED TO HIM TO REVEAL A LACK OF TRUST ON THE PART OF AMERICAN INVESTORS. "WHY DOES A COMPANY NEED INSURANCE IF IT TRUSTS US?" I REPLIED THAT I OF COURSE HAD BEEN AWARE ALL ALONG OF THIS NIGERIAN SENTIMENT AND HAD OFTEN EXPLAINED THAOMHFH NOT INVOLVED; INSTEAD THERE IS ONLY THE NEED FOR INVESTORS TO USE THE INSURANCE TO SATISFY LENDERS OF CAPITAL, ETC. HE WAS AWARE OF THIS EXPLANATION, ACCEPTS IT, AND NOW LOOKS FORWARD TO "A FLOW OF CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICAN INVESTMENTS."

9. MISCELLANEOUS. OTHER TOPICS WERE DEALT WITH MUCH MORE BRIEFLY. (1) HE ACCEPTS "IN PRINCIPLE" PRESIDENT FORD'S INVITATION TO VISIT THE US (SEPT). (2) HE REALIZES THAT OIL PRICES HAVE CAUSED ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS, BUT THE INDUSTRIAL WORLD NEED NOT FEAR "STRANGULATION" (A WORD HE USED AT LEAST SIX TIMES IN VARYING CONTEXTS, INCLUDING "STRANGULATION" OF BLACKS IN SA, ALMOST AS IF HIS VOCABULARY HAD SUDDENLY BEEN ENRICHED). POLITELY REGUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO FURTHER DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT, GIVING QBLAND ASSURANCES THAT " ALL WILL BE WELL." (3) NIGERIA CONTINUES TO ASSIGN FIRST PRIORITY TO DEVELOPMENT. FORTUNATELY PETROLEUM HAS PROVIDED THE NECESSARY RESOURCES, AND THE PLAN TO BE ANNOUNCED NEXT MONTH WILL DEMONSTRATE HIS GOVERNMENT'S DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION. (4) FOR BETTER OR WORSE, NIGERIANS ARE "A SENSITIVE PEOPLE." THE , WE GREATLY REGRETTED THE ANDERSON ARTICLE. NOW THAT THE WHOLE MATTER HAD BEEN PUT IN CONTEXT, I SHOULD "FORGET IT." (5) I SHOULD EXTEND HIS PERSONAL GOOD WISHES TO NIGERIA'S FRIENDS IN THE UNITED STATES: SENATOR BROOKE, ARTHUR HOUGHTON, CARL ROWAN, AMBASSADOR MATTHEWS, AND " MANY OTHER FIRENDS OF NIGERIA."

10. COMMENT: WHILE PRACTICALLY NOTHING NEW CAME FROM THE MEETING, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GENERAL WAS WILLING TO SPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME REVIEWING THE BIDDING, GETTING A FEW MATTERS OF HIS CHEST, AND PRONOUNCING HIS GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE STATE OF RELATIONS. IT WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING THAT HE DWELT AS LONG AS HE DID ON THE WAR SINCE IT IS A SUBJECT THAT OFFICIALS SELDOM BRING UP NOWADAYS, BUT HE IN THE END USED THE LET-BYGONES FORMULA. COMMENTS ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA ARE TO BE EXPECTED BY ANY USG OFFICIAL MEETING WITH GOWON. THE SMITH ASYLUM JAB SEEMED DELIBERATE AND COULD BE AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO THE MOJEKWU CASE. HE SCORED A POINT ON CHROME BUT MORE IN SADNESS THAN IN CHASTISEMENT. THE PROJECTED USG ROLE IN INFLUENCING SOUTH AFRICA IS AN UPDATING OF OTHER VERSIONS AND THOUGH VAGUELY PUT, IT IS STRONGLY FELT. HE IS MORE SANGUINE THAN ANYONE ELSE ABOUT PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THE UDOJI REPORT, BUT THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT HIM TO REVEAL FRUSTRATIONS AND ANXIETIES TO FOREIGNERS. OPIC REMARKS PRINCIPALLY ENLIGHTENING IN POINTING UP ONCE MORE THE PECULIARLY HARD NIGERIAN ATTITUDE RE THIS SUBJECT. TO A MAN, THEY FOUGHT LONG AND HARD AGAINST
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SIGNING AND APPARENTLY FINALLY RELENTED ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE CONVINCED, AS WE HAVE EMPHASIZED, THAT OPIC IS AT LEAST A KEY TO INCREASED AMERICAN INVESTMENTS.

11. AS ALWAYS, HE HELD FORTH IN SUSTAINED SOLILOQUIES, BUT ON THIS OCCASION THEY SEEMED REHEARSED AND COORDINATED. HE RECALLED SEVERAL EXACT DATES WHICH HE NORMALLY WOULD NOT HAVE REMEMBERED. HIS REFERENCES TO THE ANDERSON PIECE WERE PURE IYALLA WITH ALL THE SENATORIAL EMPHASES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. THE CONVEYING OF GOOD WISHES REPRESENTS THE SUMMIT'S ENDORSEMENT OF THE "CONSTITUENCY" THEORY. IN DISCUSSING SOUTHERN AFRICA THERE WERE SEVERAL REFERENCES TO EARLIER STATEMENTS, ALMOST IN AN I-TOLD-YOU FASHION, AND THE POINTS ELUCIDATED WERE THE SAME AS THOSE I HAVE HEARD FREQUENTLY FROM MEA OFFICERS.

12. ALL IN ALL, EVEN A GOWON BADLY SCARRED BY THE UDOJI EVENTS OF THE LAST TWO MONTHS CONTINUES TO BE FAIRLY CLOSE TO THE INDISPENSABLE MAN. CERTAINLY NO USG INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES WOULD BE SERVED BY HIS LEAVING DODAN BARRACKS. TOWARD THE US HE REMAINS BASICALLY WELL DISPOSED, DISILLUSIONED BUT FORGIVING ABOUT OUR POLICY DURING THE NIGERIAN CRISIS, SADDENED BY WHAT HE CONCEIVES OUR SA POLICY TO BE, CONVINCED THAT OUR TECHNOLOGY AND INVESTMENT ARE DESIRABLE FOR NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENT, HEARTENED BY US PROGRESS IN RACE RELATIONS, AND PREPARED TO CONTINUE EXCHANGES WITH A GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE FEELS COMFORTABLE. LIKE THE PROVERBIAL MISTRESS, HOWEVER, HE AND THE FMG IN GENERAL HOPES NEVER TO BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.
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